



Companion Animal Behavioural Services
Creating Contentment From Knowledge And Kindness

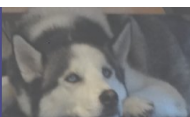
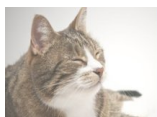
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RECOGNISING PAIN AND STRESS IN DOGS



Pain and chronic stress are responsible for promoting and exacerbating many diseases and can result in dogs expressing unwanted behaviours. Some dogs may be more prone to stress and disease because of genetic factors and/or because they have been poorly bred and reared in their first few weeks of life.

It is often worth asking a vet to check for pain even if you believe that your dog's unwanted behaviour is caused by something else.



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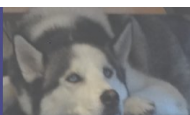
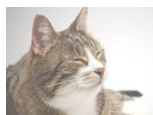
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Recognising The Signs

Dogs, like people, have different personalities. Some may be very vocal when they are in pain, others just the opposite. Some make a fuss over a relative small problem, others will mask quite severe pain. Chronic stress and pain can be harder to recognise. Look out for:

- Any change in behaviour - including hiding, aggression, inappetence etc
- Abnormal gait
- Decreasing energy and activity - including in older dogs
- Changes in sleeping patterns or habits
- Inappropriate elimination
- Changes to appetite and thirst - including eating unusual things (pica)
- Unusual facial expressions - including tension, flattened ears, closed eyes or dilated pupils, hunched position
- Unusual body positions - hunching, low tail
- Changes to vocalisation including growling when approached
- Unusual breathing patterns
- Excessive licking or chewing the body.

You know your dog best. It is always worth calling your vet if you are at all concerned.



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Avoiding Stress

A small amount of stress (eustress) plays an important part in keeping dogs alert and safe and helps them to learn new things. However, when stress is extreme or prolonged, it can cause a great deal of damage.

Consistency and routine are important ways of keeping a dog's world predictable. Any changes that are unavoidable such as moving house or changes to the household composition should be prepared for and introduced gradually wherever possible and with as much of the usual routine maintained. Even going on holiday or family gatherings can be upsetting for some dogs.

Separate resources should be provided for each animal in a multi-animal household and be placed where each animal can have access without encountering another animal. Introducing a new animal should be carefully prepared for and controlled until the new animal is accepted.

Be sensitive to your dog's desire to interact with humans; like people, dogs have different personalities and some are more social than others. Don't forget to balance the amount of exercise with plenty of mental stimulation. Puzzle toys and training are excellent ways of keeping active dogs mentally healthy and in preventing boredom, especially if your dog needs to spend some time alone. Make sure that only safe toys such as Kongs are available if your dog is not going to be supervised.

**Contact Companion Animal Behavioural Services at
info@dogsnet.org for more help**

